

AGGIES IN WWI

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in the trenches of the Argonne Forrest in north-eastern France, sat thousands of allied troops. It was the fall of 1918, it was World War I. The battle was muddy, rainy and most of all it was bloody. It was one of the largest and deadliest battles in U.S. military history, involving over a million American soldiers. Among the masses, in the front line trenches, sat James Vernon "Pinky" Wilson, a marine from Texas, who amidst chaos felt called to write what would become one of the most famous songs in college history, the Aggie War Hymn.

Pinky Wilson grew up in the small Texas town of Florence, about 30 miles north of Austin. In 1917, he was a junior enrolled at Texas A&M University when he volunteered to serve our country in World War I.

Wilson fought with the 6th Marine Regiment and by choice he became buck private in the Marine Corps, turning down two commissions, remaining a buck private throughout his military career. Not long after joining his Marine outfit as a replacement, Wilson saw firsthand the rigorous and relentless fighting in the Champagne area of France.

In November of 1918, Wilson found himself right in the middle of the Battle of the Argonne Forrest. By the time Wilson took his first muddy spot in the trenches, the battle had been waging on for 37 days. For the remaining days, the Germans gave everything they had, fighting to the death. Knowing that the end was near, the Germans were desperate to try and steer the war in their favor.

They bombarded and pelted the Marines with infantry, artillery, and machine gun fire. While sitting in the foxhole watching this bloodbath unfold before him, Wilson was struck with an idea. In an interview with the San Antonio Express-News in 1975, Wilson recalled that it was during the Champagne battle he had a running idea of writing a song. A fight song that a quartet would sing for Texas A&M. He took out a pencil and some letters from home and began scribbling the lines of the song that would become one of the most recognizable songs in Texas history.

Wilson sat with his lyrics in the trenches until the war was over. Since he wrote the song and knew it perfectly in his head, melody, lyrics and all, he never bothered to keep the original copy he wrote. The tenor of the War Hymn as it was officially named, takes digs at the arch rival of Texas A&M, the University of Texas Longhorns.

By the time the Battle of the Argonne Forrest was over, it had been a 47 day nightmare that the allies were able to wake up from. And they woke up victorious, the war was over. The bloody battle that began on September 26, 1918, concluded World War I. It lasted until the Armistice, on November 11, 1918.

What is remarkable about the class of 1917 at Texas A&M University is that they all volunteered to serve our country. Some as officers and some as enlisted men. These men went on to fight in World War I to serve and protect America and her freedoms. They were the fathers of the Greatest Generation.

They came back and had families, instilling the same sense of selfless service in their

sons and younger generation. When World War II started, the entire graduating classes of 1941 and 1942 at Texas A&M University did the exact same thing; they all volunteered to serve our country.

The Aggies at A&M have a long tradition of service to the military. A&M commissions so many officers into our military that the number rivals our service academies.

Much like the writing of our Star Spangled Banner, the Aggie War Hymn was born from a place of true patriotism during a time of pure terror and a fight for freedom. While the original version that Wilson wrote had a first verse, the second verse makes up the war hymn. And still, almost 100 years later, this second verse marks one of the most notable and famous A&M traditions. After the war, Wilson eventually returned to A&M to earn a degree and graduate with the class of 1920. He went on to become a successful Texas Rancher.

His alma mater will be forever grateful for his contribution to not only his school, but to the State of Texas and his country.

To quote the Aggie War Hymn, "Rough tough, real stuff, Texas A&M,"—those Aggies who fought in WWI, WWII and those who have served and are currently serving our country embody this line to the fullest extent.

James Vernon "Pinky" Wilson is one of the remarkable men who answered the call of his country. There truly are none quite like the Texas A&M Aggies.

The Aggie spirit is engrained and rooted deep into Texas A&M. They are hard core patriots, committed cadets and forever rivals of the University of Texas. They are and will always be the pulse of Texas A&M. Gig 'em.

And that's just the way it is.

THE AGGIE WAR HYMN

(By Pinky Wilson)

Hullabaloo, Caneck! Caneck!
Hullabaloo, Caneck! Caneck!

FIRST VERSE

All hail to dear old Texas A&M
Rally around Maroon and White
Good luck to dear old Texas Aggies
They are the boys who show the real old fight

That good old Aggie spirit thrills us
And makes us yell and yell and yell
So let's fight for dear old Texas A&M
We're going to beat you all to
Chig-gar-roo-gar-rem
Chig-gar-roo-gar-rem

Rough Tough! Real Stuff! Texas A&M!

SECOND VERSE

Good-bye to Texas university
So long to the orange and the white
Good luck to dear old Texas Aggies
They are the boys that show the real old fight

"The eyes of Texas are upon you . . ."

That is the song they sing so well
So good-bye to Texas university
We're going to beat you all to
Chig-gar-roo-gar-rem
Chig-gar-roo-gar-rem
Rough Tough! Real Stuff! Texas A&M!

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT
OF BERNARD "BERNY" BALKONIS

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of the retirement of Bernard "Berny" Frank

Balkonis, Jr. Mr. Balkonis was Vice President of Sales for Prairie Estates Genetics of Middleton, Wisconsin. Mr. Balkonis' retirement at the end of 2014 marked the conclusion of a 40 year career in the seed corn industry. The President of Prairie Estates Genetics, Ron Rogers, affirmed that Balkonis leaves a robust legacy as a fantastic mentor to forage managers and a valued member of the Prairie Estates Genetics team.

Mr. Balkonis graduated from University of Wisconsin-River Falls in 1975, working on dairy farms in the summer and during holiday breaks to make his way through school. After graduation and marriage to his high school sweetheart, Mr. Balkonis was recruited by Farm Supply (Growmark), and managed a store location in northern Illinois for five years. After his time with Farm Supply, he then joined PAG Seeds, a division of Cargill. During his time with PAG Seeds, Mr. Balkonis worked as a territory manager in southwest Michigan. After PAG Seeds, Paymaster, and Cargill combined to create Cargill Hybrid Seeds, Balkonis was moved to northern Michigan, where he became both territory manager and assistant district manager. While located throughout Michigan, Mr. Balkonis and his wife welcomed three sons into the world.

In 1992, Mr. Balkonis was promoted within Cargill Hybrid Seeds to area manager for the eastern United States. Then, in 1996, Mr. Balkonis assumed the position of area manager for the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois and moved his family to Holmen, Wisconsin. In 2000, when Cargill Hybrid Seeds sold to Dow (becoming the entity Mycogen), Mr. Balkonis remained on as area manager. After his time as area manager with Mycogen, Mr. Balkonis took on the responsibilities of VP of Sales for Prairie Estates Genetics, where he would spend the rest of his career and begin the transition to the new role of grandparent with the birth of his first grandson Efram.

Mr. Balkonis will retire with his wife of 40 years, Claudia, in Trempealeau, Wisconsin, just 10 miles north of Holmen where they raised their three sons, Adam, Scott and Wade. I wish to extend the best of wishes to Berny as he steps into retirement and that next great adventure.

IN HONOR OF MAJOR CHAD ERIN
LAMPHERE

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Major Chad Erin Lamphere, an American hero who valiantly served his country while serving in the United States Army.

Chad was born on August 24, 1973 on a small family farm in Arkansaw, WI. Displaying a warm heart at a young age, Chad helped his family raise dogs, cats, pigs, and goats, while also contributing and giving back to his community through partaking in 4-H. Chad quickly rose to the top of his academic classes, graduating with two degrees and as Valedictorian from Hartnell College, and later attending UCLA for pre-medical courses, in which he graduated Summa Cum Laude.

Chad joined the U.S. Army in 2006 in pursuit of a degree in medicine. In 2009, Chad joined the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and as a doctor, provided much needed care and services to his fellow comrades who he valiantly served next to. Additionally Chad's selflessness and can-do attitude shined while serving in the U.S. Army, receiving multiple awards during his Active Duty assignments: the Bronze Star Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon.

In addition, to serving his country, Chad was a caring friend, loving father, and husband, and dedicated family man. Chad leaves behind his wife, Lindsay Della Valla, daughter, Emma Lamphere and son, Chad Erin Lamphere Jr., three siblings: Kirk, Jarrod, and Nicole, and his loving parents: Suzanne and Brad du Verrier.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of an accomplished American hero and loving husband, Major Chad Erin Lamphere. His life, legacy, and service to the United States of America will never be forgotten.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleague Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI and I rise to congratulate the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, commonly referred to as the Transportation Authority, on its 25th anniversary and its many accomplishments.

Established in 1989, the Transportation Authority administers and oversees the delivery of the county's half-cent local transportation sales tax program and New Expenditure Plan. The agency was founded by the people of San Francisco to administer Proposition B, a half-cent transportation sales tax program, which began in 1990 and was reauthorized in 2003 when voters approved Proposition K.

For the last quarter-century, the Transportation Authority has been responsible for long-range transportation planning in San Francisco and has analyzed, designed, and funded vital improvements for San Francisco's roadways and public transportation networks. It has significantly increased the region's mobility.

Since 1990, the Transportation Authority has also been the designated Congestion Management Agency for San Francisco, and has served as the San Francisco Program Manager for grants from the Transportation Fund for Clean Air. When passed by voters in 2010, the agency also began serving as the administrator of Proposition AA, a \$10 annual fee on motor vehicles registered in San Francisco.

In these capacities the Transportation Authority has embodied its mission of providing prudent financial management, planning expertise, and project delivery oversight to create a better city for residents, workers and visitors. Through innovation, the Transpor-

tation Authority continues to study, plan, and invest in transportation infrastructure that supports San Francisco's thriving economy and meets the needs of its diverse community. The agency serves as a steward to help fund major capital projects such as the Presidio Parkway, Central Subway and Transbay Transit Center, as well as neighborhood-scale improvements that impact everyday San Franciscans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to recognize and honor the leaders of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority on its 25th anniversary. This agency, its Board, Community Advisory Committee members and staff deserve to be congratulated for their leadership during the last 25 years and we wish them continued success for the next 25 years.

HONORING MAINE'S OLDEST LIVING PEARL HARBOR VETERAN

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent with a story that should be heard. At 95 years old, James Watson of South Portland, Maine, is our state's oldest living veteran who was present during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The morning of December 7, 1941, began like many others for Mr. Watson. At the time, he was a gunner's mate first class aboard the U.S.S. *Phoenix*, which was anchored across the harbor from Battleship Row. He was reading the Sunday paper below deck when he felt a vibration rock the ship, then heard a call over the loudspeaker to report to battle stations.

Once topside, he saw anti-aircraft explosions in the air and smelled thick clouds of burning fuel. He knew instantly that the country was at war. What followed after was a blur. "You're too busy to be scared. You're just mad. You're angry," Mr. Watson recently recounted to a local newspaper.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy." And, indeed, from books, films, and photos, we can still get a sense of that day's incredible devastation and terrible loss of the life. But as the days go by, there are fewer and fewer living veterans who saw it through their own eyes and can recall what it was like to go through such an experience. Their stories are critical to ensuring that we never forget what happened there.

I appreciate that Mr. Watson has shared his memories so we can better understand and remember one of the most pivotal moments in our nation's history. And I thank him for his brave service that day, and the rest that followed.

CELEBRATING THE MORRIS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S 10TH ANNUAL HEARTS & HAMMERS GALA

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Morris Habitat for Humanity, located in Randolph, New Jersey as it celebrates 30 years of building homes and changing lives.

Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit housing organization founded in 1976, implements Christian principles in the pursuit of building homes, communities, and hope. This organization wholeheartedly believes that every man, woman, and child should have a home that is safe and dignified. The members of Habitat for Humanity strive to achieve this goal every day, and are important members of every community.

For 30 years, members of the Morris Habitat for Humanity have selflessly worked toward ensuring that those people in need of housing assistance receive help. Officially created in October 1985, Habitat for Humanity's Morris County branch operated in the center of Morristown with a single computer and a phone. Its several founding members began to investigate the housing situation of Morristown, and learned the processes of selecting families for assistance. Since then, Morris Habitat for Humanity has successfully completed building over 60 houses in New Jersey and more than 140 houses in other countries. The members of this group voluntarily offer their time and efforts to ensure that any person seeking help, regardless of religious affiliation, may realize the American dream of homeownership.

This organization's most current project, in collaboration with the Morris County Affordable Housing Corporation, aims to construct a fiveplex containing two 3-bedroom and three 2-bedroom townhomes on Carlton Street in Morris Township, New Jersey. These townhomes will be sold to low- and moderate-incomes households, and will feature the latest ENERGY STAR technology. In order to select families for this housing project, the Morris Habitat for Humanity uses a lottery system. Currently, the project is set for completion in December, 2015.

To celebrate 30 successful years of improving the housing situation for many members of the local community, the Morris Habitat for Humanity will host its 10th Annual Hearts & Hammers Gala on Saturday, February 28th, 2015 at the Meadow Wood Manor in Randolph, New Jersey. The Gala will feature dinner, a silent auction, wine pull, awards, and live music. All proceeds will be used to further the Morris Habitat for Humanity's mission of building affordable housing for those families in need.

At this year's Gala, the Morris Habitat for Humanity will honor Richard A. Sleece, President of Richard A. Sleece Associates, with the Founders Award, Ruth Ryan, Vice President of Chubb Insurance, with the Beth Everett Award, and Rick Ostberg, former ReStore Director, with the ReStore Pioneer Award.

I commend the members of the Morris Habitat for Humanity, especially Executive Director Blair Schleicher Bravo, for their dedication to improving the lives of many Morris County